

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is believing Jesus' words.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of October 11, 2008

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Deuteronomy chapter 18, verses 15 through 22.

Commentary: At the end of the age, many false prophets will lead many disciples astray (Matt 24:11), with each of these false prophets coming in the name of Jesus so the concept of another prophet like Moses arising from Israel must be discussed.

All of Deuteronomy occurs or is written at the end of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness. Of those Israelites numbered in the census of the second year, only Moses, Joshua, and Caleb remain—and Moses will die before Israel crosses the Jordan. So the nation Moses addresses on the plains of Moab (Deut chaps 29-32) consists of the children of the Israelites and Egyptians (mixed multitude) that left Egypt forty years earlier. Most of these children were born in the wilderness so they were uncircumcised (Josh 5:2-7), and most had no actual memories of leaving Egypt or even of the Lord speaking from atop Mount Sinai.

The reason the Lord was speaking to Israel through the prophet Moses and not then speaking directly with the people was by request of Israel: at Sinai, the people said to Moses *Let us not hear again the voice of the Lord or see the great fire lest we die*, and the Lord honored the request of the people ... why did the Lord so readily agree not to again speak directly to the people? Was it because He intended from the beginning to make from Moses a greater nation than that of Israel? Regardless of Moses' pleadings to the contrary, that is what has happened: the great nation of God will be built from those who believe Moses' writings, for if an Israelite will not believe Moses' writings the Israelite will not believe the words of Jesus (John 5:46-47), and if the person will not believe Jesus the person will not believe the Father (v. 24) and will not be glorified.

Why transform Moses into a prophet when Moses was to liberate Israel? Is liberation through a prophet?

Moses spoke to Pharaoh on behalf of the Lord: yes, Moses spoke to Pharaoh on the behalf of the people of Israel, but Israel never asked him to speak for them, and for some time, Israel was certain that Moses did them more harm than good. So it was on behalf of the Lord that Moses returned to Egypt and commanded Pharaoh to let His people go.

And in fulfilling this task, was Moses not then a prophet, for what is a prophet other than one who speaks for the Lord; who speaks the words of the Lord?

When Moses spoke the words of the Lord to Pharaoh he was a prophet—and the prophet like Moses that would arise from Israel shall deliver the words of the Most High to the one who then rules over Israel.

It is assumed almost without challenge that God rules over His holy nation Israel, but is this really the case? Was not Pharaoh ruling over Israel in Egypt, and was not Nebuchadnezzar ruling over Israel in Babylon? Certainly it must be acknowledged that the Lord was over both Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, but He delivered Israel into the hand of the King of Babylon because of the nation's lawlessness. Because of Israel's perverseness, He promised to hide His face from Israel and watch to see what the nation's end would be (Deut 32:20). This is before "a fire is kindled by [His] anger" that "burns to the depths of Sheol," devouring "the earth and its increase" (v. 22); so He will not hide His face for long before He acts to end life as humankind knows it. Therefore, when the Lord raises a prophet like Moses from among the people, Israel will not be a free people but a nation serving in bondage as Israel in Egypt served Pharaoh.

The Lord told Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:7–9). The Lord had waited a precise length of time before intervening in the affairs of Egypt, for at "the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Ex 12:41). Likewise, a precise length of time will have passed when God brings forth a prophet like Moses and when this prophet leads Israel out of bondage.

Why did God not go directly to the elders of Israel and tell them to arise and go and He, the Lord, would cover their exodus by slaying the Egyptians that came after them? Why go through the roundabout means of calling Moses, having Moses protest going which caused the incorporation of Moses' brother Aaron, then sending Moses across the Egyptian border as well as the boundary between circumcision and uncircumcision to confront Pharaoh who was then perhaps the most powerful human being alive? Why harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not let Israel go—and why should Pharaoh have freed an enslaved nation as many in number as Egypt itself? Was the Lord merely seeking an opportunity to kill Egyptians?

Paul writes that what happened in Egypt and in the wilderness occurred as an example so that disciples would not desire evil (1 Cor 10:6), but does that explain why such an indirect means was used to extricate Israel from Egyptian bondage? Or is the explanation in the work of the prophet that would arise like Moses?

An "example—τύποι" in this case is a type or sampler of what happens if disciples desire evil. But is it possible for disciples not to desire evil, and what would happen if disciples did not desire evil?

If disciples hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him and never desire evil, will those things that happened to Israel in the wilderness then happen to disciples? Apparently not, for Jesus said the one who heard His words and believed them (they are the words of the One who sent Him) would pass from death to life without coming under judgment (John 5:24). Is, then, coming under judgment and all

that judgment entails the result of desiring evil? According to Jesus, coming under judgment is the result of not believing His words.

Peter writes, “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God” (1 Pet 4:17). And the writer of Hebrew says, “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (9:27–28). Sin is lawlessness, so when Christ appears again He will not appear to deal with sin: judgments will, where necessary, have already been made. Those who believe Christ will not come under judgment for they have no sin, no lawlessness. Thus, it is only those who desire evil that will be condemned. Those who desired evil, repented, and overcame evil will have their judgments already made.

The above concept needs pondered for a moment: if a person never desired evil, the person would never come under judgment but would pass directly from death to life. This person would not have been appointed to die once, for this person would not have been consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) as all of humankind has been since the first Adam ate forbidden fruit. Jesus would be such a person since His Father was not the first Adam, but *Yah*. If He had not taken upon Himself the sins of Israel, He would have passed from being spiritually lifeless to *life* without coming under judgment. He would never have “died,” but would rather have been transformed in the twinkling of an eye from having a body composed of perishable flesh to having a body formed from imperishable spirit. The Apostle Paul writes of such a transformation: “Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them [those resurrected from the grave] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess 4:17).

Desiring evil is what causes a person to come under judgment.

But how can a person not desire evil when God has consigned every person descended from the first Adam to disobedience?

If God has consigned or delivered every person to disobedience so that He can have mercy on all, then every person is as an Israelite in the wilderness was—and Israel in Egypt and in the wilderness forms a shadow or type of endtime Israel, a nation circumcised of heart, a nation that has desired evil and has overcome evil through wrestling with God as Jacob, born deceitful, wrestled with the Lord and prevailed to the extent that his name was changed to Israel ... it is a disciple’s wrestling with God and prevailing that makes each disciple a spiritual Israelite, giving to the disciple a circumcised heart through keeping the commandments by faith.

Prevailing with God always requires the disciple to act upon faith, for without faith no one can please God.

Acting upon faith is actions based on belief. For disciples belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the prophet promised by Moses forms the basis for acting upon faith; therefore, what Moses prophesied forms a type or sampler of what Jesus prophesies. And Moses went first to Pharaoh to do all of the miracles that the Lord had put in Moses’ power (Ex 4:21), but no man has a heart as hard as the prince of this world so the Lord had to harden Pharaoh’s heart in order for him to serve as a type of the spiritual king of Babylon ... the Logos went to the prince of this world to command the Adversary to let Israel go free, but there was no Israel then circumcised of heart—

At Calvary Jesus paid the death penalty for every Israelite in this world. The inner self or person [not the tent of flesh] who had been consigned to disobedience is crucified

with Christ and dies a death like His. And within the “house” of that crucified old man, a new self or nature has been born of spirit as a firstborn son of God. This new nature is born under no condemnation (Rom 8:1); it is not born subject to original sin but born free to keep the commandments. And when first born, sin has no dominion over this new self. However, because the flesh desires evil, this desire leftover from the old self or nature, too often the disciple returns to being a bondservant to sin (Rom 6:16), thereby spurning grace and returning to being under the law, writing anew a record of debt with its legal demands that stand against the disciple.

Yes, after God forgives the trespasses (the transgressions of the commandments) of disciples, thus canceling the record of debt that had stood against the person, most disciples begin a new record of debt by willingly returning to sin. Grace doesn't cover the person who presents him or herself to sin as its willing servant. The teacher of Israel who would have newly born-from-above disciples ignore the law of God will be denied when judgments are revealed (Matt 7:21–23); for such teachers of Israel, regardless of mighty works done in the name of Jesus, serve the prince of this world as ancient Israelite taskmasters served Pharaoh in Egypt. They will be denied by Christ and abused by the prince of this world. Nevertheless, until the end they will teach Israel some variation of *because Jesus kept the commandments Christians do not have to keep the commandments*.

If Jesus, who kept the commandments, dwells within the disciple, will not this same Jesus cause the disciple to also keep the commandments? Of course He will. So the disciple who does not strive to keep the commandments by faith is without the spirit of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ]. The Apostle Paul writes, “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] does not belong to him” (Rom 8:9). And John writes,

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he [Jesus] appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. *Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil*, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning*, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. *By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.* (1 John 3:4–10 emphasis added)

So the person who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ but belongs instead to the devil—and how does a person know whether he or she has the indwelling spirit of Christ? A person knows by whether the person practices righteousness. If a person continues to sin or to practice lawlessness, the person is of the devil and does not belong to Christ.

The Apostle Paul also wrote,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. *For the mind that is set on the flesh is*

hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.
Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:5–8 emphasis added)

The person who does not submit to God's law—and this includes the Sabbath commandment—does not have the indwelling spirit of Christ. This person's mind will, inevitably, be set on the flesh and on the things of the flesh. John warns such a person, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15–17).

The Logos went to the prince of this world and demanded that this prince let Israel go before He entered His creation as His only Son, born of Mary as the infant Jesus of Nazareth, who would be the prophet about whom Moses wrote (John 5:46–47). And here is where understanding is required: a ransom must be paid for the liberation of Israel, with this ransom price to be paid in advance.

Ancient Israel was liberated from physical bondage to a physical king in a physical nation. Endtime Israel was/will be liberated from spiritual bondage to a spiritual king in a spiritual nation, with this liberation being from sin and death in the single kingdom of this world, Babylon. When liberated from bondage to sin and death, disciples are no longer involuntary sons of disobedience. Rather, they are free to choose life or death, with choosing life entailing loving God and keeping His commandments by faith, thereby circumcising the heart. The person who chooses death voluntarily returns to being a servant of sin, with the foremost visible example of choosing death being the outward transgression of the Sabbath commandment.

The disciple is not merely a spiritual Israelite, but is a spiritual Levite serving in the temple of God.

Both Israel and Egypt paid a price for the redemption and liberation of Israel from bondage to Pharaoh: Israel sacrificed lambs of the first year, a lamb for a household, and Egypt saw the involuntary deaths of the firstborns of man and beasts. Blood was shed or lives were lost by both Israel and Egypt; for if a firstborn of Israel had not been covered by the blood of a paschal lamb that uncovered firstborn would have perished in the same way the firstborn of Egypt perished. The death angel that shed the blood necessary to ratify the covenant made on the day when the Lord took the fathers of Israel by the hand to lead the nation out from Egypt made no distinction between an uncovered Israelite and an uncovered Egyptian. This death angel only passed over those houses that had the blood of a lamb smeared on doorposts and lintels. This death slew the firstborn of every other house. Therefore, the Israelite who was passed over was also first to shed blood.

The ransom price paid by ancient Israel in advance of the death angel passing over all of the land was paid when the lamb selected on the 10th of Abib was sacrificed at even on the 14th. Ancient Israel then had to roast that selected whole. With feet shod and loins girded and staffs in hand, Israel had to wait and watch for the death angel to pass over the land. As a lamb appropriate to the size of the household roasted over fire, the household, if it believed Moses, waited and watched. If it didn't believe Moses, the household settled in for the night, probably laughing at or mocking those households that were roasting a lamb.

If Jesus is a prophet like Moses, and if He is the paschal Lamb of God, sacrificed at Calvary, the world will be as the Egyptians were and the Church will be as Israel was with one principle exception: the Church consists of two tiers of disciples, with one tier believing Jesus and with the far larger lower tier believing in Jesus ... *believing Jesus* differs greatly from *believing in Jesus*, for the first will have disciples believing the writings of Moses and hearing and believing the words of Jesus (John 5:47), whereas the second has disciples believing that Jesus was the Son of God and that because He died for them they do not have to actually live as He lived but they live vicariously through Him by professing belief in Him. This is analogous to saying that because Jesus kept the Sabbath His disciples need not keep the Sabbath. Or because Jesus kept the high Sabbaths His disciples need not keep the high days. Or because Jesus did not eat unclean meats His disciples are free to eat unclean meats. And absurdity enters into these juxtapositions: if Jesus lived as an Observant Jew, the person in whom the spirit of Christ dwells will also live as an Observant Jew, not as a lawless Gentile. To declare that because Jesus kept the law and because He now dwells within the Christian, this *Christian* need not keep the law defies logic and any reasonable explanation of what it means to be a disciple ... the first disciples were not so foolish as to proclaim that good will come from doing evil (Rom 3:8).

Evil and death come from doing evil.

Judgment comes from a disciple desiring evil.

And the whole house of Israel has desired to do evil.

Moses led Israel to the plains of Moab where God made an additional covenant with the children of Israel, the children then present and the children not then present (Deut 29:1, 10–15). Today, Moses leads Israel, physical and spiritual, to the choice of life or death (Deut 30:15–20), but it is Joshua/Jesus [Ἰησοῦ] that leads Israel into God's rest or into God's presence, with this rest represented by the geographical land of Judea (Ps 95:10–11) and by Sabbath observance (Heb 3:16–4:11). Every Israelite who would come to God must come through the Moab covenant, first mediated by Moses and now mediated by Christ Jesus. No Israelite, physical or spiritual, can come to God by sneaking across an imaginary boundary that still leaves the person a servant to sin. This means, simply, that the person who has the law either as a book in his or her hands or inscribed on the heart and mind but who chooses not to keep the law is of the devil.

The ransom price that endtime Israel paid in advance for its liberation from sin and death—the price analogous to the paschal lambs ancient Israel sacrificed at even on the 14th of Abib—was the death of Jesus of Nazareth on the 14th of Abib ... this price was paid so far in advance that Israel long ago grew weary of waiting for the death angel to pass over the land, slaying firstborns not covered by the blood of this paschal Lamb of God. The Church waited rather impatiently for Jesus' return, waited until a generation passed. Then its faith slipped: if *heaven and earth would pass away but not Jesus' words* (Matt 24:34–35), 2nd-Century bishops were certain that a new reading strategy needed to be employed, and a new one bubbled forth from the school of Alexandria. But this strategy (now at the heart of historical exegesis) had more in common with a broken sewer pipe than with God: the Church ceased taking the sacraments on the 14th of Abib. The example of when to take the sacraments that Jesus had left His disciples was lost in the anti-Semitic zeal of 1st and 2nd Century Greeks. As a result, the Church ceased to take the sacraments of bread and wine on the night that Jesus was betrayed. Sins ceased

being covered, and the Father delivered the Church into the hand of the prince of this world for the destruction of the flesh.

When the sacraments were again taken on the night Jesus was betrayed can be debated, but the practice had few if any adherents until it was revived in the 20th-Century; the practice has since shrunk to a few double handfuls of disciples. And a third or more of all self-professed Christians do not even wrongly take the sacraments.

Endtime Israel paid its portion of its ransom price at Calvary: Jesus paid this price for His disciples, but the price He paid was for the liberation of the inner self, not the tent of flesh which remains subject to sin and death.

The price paid by Jesus' death—the price paid in advance of when the death angel passes over the land—covers the sins of the firstborn son of God that dwells in the tent of flesh of the old self. These sins are not covered if the *Christian* does not take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed. Bread and wine offered to God at any other time but on the night Jesus was betrayed are Cain's offering, the fruit of the ground. Only on one night a year does bread and wine represent the body and blood of the paschal Lamb of God. So when the Christian Church outwardly rebelled against Christ in its first centuries, Christ delivered the Church into the hand of the prince of this world for the destruction of the flesh so that spirits might be saved when judgments are revealed (1 Cor 5:5). And the Church would have to wait for Christ's return until after the fullness of Gentiles would be called as disciples.

All of Christendom has been waiting, knowingly or unknowingly, for the death angel to pass over the single kingdom of spiritual Babylon, the kingdom of this world. Those who have fallen spiritually asleep will neglect to eat of the Lamb of God on the night He was betrayed. Those who have rebelled against God will not eat on this night but on another night. Those who have forgotten why they are eating on the 14th of Abib will be surprised when the death angel passes over them. Only those disciples who hold the testimony of Jesus will eat with anticipation of a second Passover liberation of Israel. Yet, Jesus as that prophet like Moses told His disciples long ago not to be alarmed by the things that happen in this world (Matt 24:6), that the things of this world are only the early labor pains of Zion giving birth to a nation in a day (Isa 66:7–8), with Zion's hard labor pains to follow not precede childbirth.

Jesus told His disciples what not to be concerned about and what would happen, but His words have not been believed for the writings of Moses were not believed. It is only when the writings of Moses are believed that disciples will believe or even hear the words of Jesus.

The Lord said He would make of Moses His great nation although Moses vigorously protested the idea, but those were His plans from the beginning. It is through the prophet like Moses that salvation has come to humankind, with this prophet being Jesus of Nazareth. What happened to Israel in Egypt and in the wilderness was a type or a chiral image of what would happen to spiritually circumcised Israel following Calvary and of what will happen to Israel prior to the fall of spiritual Babylon, with Israel going from a physically circumcised nation to a nation circumcised of heart to a nation liberated from indwelling sin and death. The harvest of firstfruits that began with Christ Jesus as First of the firstfruits was foreshadowed by ancient Israel's exodus from Egypt, for endtime Israel's exodus is from sin and death ... salvation is Israel's recovery from death, represented by Assyria in Scripture.

But—and here is where unbelief separates the two tiers of Christendom—to believe the words of Jesus about salvation the disciple must also believe the writings of Moses who wrote about Jesus. Those disciples who *believe* Jesus are as oil and wine while those disciples who *believe in* Jesus are as barley and wheat (Rev 6:5–6), seed that will be bought and sold by Sin, the third horseman, the representation of Egypt and the king of the South. Sin cannot harm those disciples who take the Passover sacraments on the night Jesus was betrayed; they are the already processed fruits of the Promised Land that will pass from death to life for they do not desire evil. The death angel that will pass over Babylon will pass over them without slaying the firstborn son dwelling within their tents of flesh.

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The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.

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